Yukon Health &

Social Services Council

Annual Report

1995 - 1996

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Yukon Health &
Social Services Council

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL IS

**TO RECOMMEND AND PROMOTE ACTION
THAT IMPROVES THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
OF YUKON PEOPLE.**

This annual report outlines the activities of the Yukon Health and Social Services Council in furthering the Council's mandate.

Over the past year, at the request of the Ministers of Health and Social Services and Justice, Council members reviewed various issues and strategies under consideration by government, and heard presentations on a broad range of issues considered to be important to Yukon people.

Council members review and analyze large volumes of information and Council's deliberations result in recommendations to government on a wide variety of matters related to health, social services and justice. Many of these issues are brought to Council by community representatives and members of the general public. It is our belief that Council's efforts continue to provide a positive contribution towards improving the health and well-being of Yukon people.

We would like to thank all Council members, past and present, who have worked together to advance the mandate of the Council and to those who have provided support to the Council in a variety of capacities.

Sincerely,

David Buchan
Chair

Mary Ellen McCaffrey
Co-Chair

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- In keeping with the practise of previous years, efforts were made to ensure that the activities of the Council were accessible to all Yukon residents. Newspaper advertisements and posters in Yukon communities provided information about the Council, its meeting dates and agenda items. Council continued to accommodate requests from Yukon residents wishing to make presentations on any issues that fall within the Council's mandate.

- The Minutes of Council meetings are public documents and are circulated to individuals and organizations upon request. In this way, community awareness of Council activities is also enhanced.

HEALTH INVESTMENT FUND

- In 1995/96, Council continued to have representation on the committee that considers requests for funding from the Health Investment Fund. The member attends all regular meetings and provides quarterly updates to the Yukon Health and Social Services Council.

COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- At the request of the Minister of Health & Social Services and the Minister of Justice, sub-committees of Council were established to address specific issues. Council reviewed and provided comments on the following matters:

    - youth initiatives
    - notification of the release of high risk sex offenders
    - Yukon Children's Dental Program
    - continuing care
    - midwifery
    - community health transfer
    - social assistance.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

During the course of the year, Council heard presentations from several organizations and individuals. The topics presented included the following:

CHALLENGE SCHOOL TO WORK PROGRAM

- This presentation was provided by representatives from Challenge - Community Vocational Alternatives, who summarized the content of a program designed to provide cognitively impaired individuals with skills that enable them to enter the workforce. The seven-week program is offered at Yukon College based on curriculum developed by the college; students are taught skills related to food service and kitchen work. Participants in the program have included people with FAS/FAE, Downe's syndrome and learning disabilities.

- YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR SUCCESS (YES)

  The co-ordinator of the Youth Empowerment for Success (YES) program provided an outline of the program, explaining that the concept of this program had arisen from the "Out of Mainstream Youth Conference" held in 1994. The focus of the program is to address problems faced by out-of-mainstream youth and youth-at-risk throughout the Yukon. The key concept is to improve self-esteem and empower young people to achieve their goals by providing information, resources and support.

- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES INITIATIVES

  Staff from the Department of Health and Social Services kept Council informed throughout the year on the status of Departmental initiatives, including the Phase II Health Transfer, national social policy reform and the Department's strategic planning process.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL cont.

- COMMUNITY JUSTICE

Council continued to take considerable interest in community justice during the year. As well as having a regular update on the topic from a Council member who works in the field, two specific presentations were made to Council.

- Judge Barry Stuart spoke to Council on the role of community justice and circle sentencing in the Yukon. Judge Stewart also spoke about the considerable success that this model of justice has enjoyed in New Zealand, where circle sentencing is used as a sentencing option with all types of crime except murder and manslaughter. Council was advised that victim participation in circles in New Zealand is high and that the number of incarcerated individuals has decreased; lower recidivism rates have also been noted. Judge Stuart noted that the emphasis of any community justice programs dealing with offenders should be to ensure the re-integration of offenders into the community.

- Rose Wilson, a court support worker with the Kwanlin Dun First Nation provided an overview of circle sentencing in Yukon communities. Council was advised that an accused individual must be fully committed to participating in the process in order to be accepted for circle sentencing. The offender's level of motivation, admittance of guilt and willingness to take responsibility for the offence are taken into account in determining whether an offender will be accepted for circle sentencing; this determination is made by a committee comprised of community members. It was noted that when an offender has taken part in a circle prior to a court sentencing, the recommendations from the circle are often accepted by the court.

- GENDER EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

Department of Education staff discussed the current gender equity policy in place within the Department of Education. Council was advised that an implementation strategy for the policy will be prepared and that an advisory group, reporting to the Deputy Minister, will monitor implementation of the gender equity policy. The Department was advised that Council would welcome being kept informed of progress in this area.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL cont.

- COMMUNITY HEALTH ON THE STREET

Lori Tulloch, a community health outreach nurse, provided Council with an overview of her job working primarily with people who might otherwise not have access to health care (e.g. homeless, youth-at-risk). Council was advised that the role of the outreach nurse in Whitehorse was developed based on client needs and currently the service provides a walk-in public clinic, advocacy services and education. Referrals are also received from Whitehorse General Hospital for outreach clients who are leaving hospital but require follow-up care.

- HEALTH STATUS REPORT

Staff from the Department of Health and Social Services staff advised Council that the Health Act required that a Health Status Report be prepared every three years. The purpose of the report is to provide the government, health professionals and other interested parties with practical information on the health of people in the Yukon, including a comparison of Yukon people with those in other jurisdictions across Canada. Council was provided with a summary of the findings of the report and was advised that further analysis of key issues from the report would be undertaken.

- BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

This presentation offered a model for a community development approach to health care delivery as an alternative to the current service delivery approach. Council was advised that the current service delivery model can make communities dependent on government while the alternative community development approach to health provides for communities to make decisions on which services are required and how they may be delivered. It was noted that with a community development model, the role of agencies would change to that of facilitator rather than provider of the service. In addition, current system tends to result in resources being directed towards treatment whereas a community development model, tailored to the needs of individual communities, would place more emphasis on prevention than on acute care.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL cont.

- **FIRST NATIONS PROGRAMMING IN HIGH SCHOOL**

The Superintendent of Public Schools and the First Nations Education Consultant from the Department of Education provided an overview of First Nations programming at the F. H. Collins High School. Council was advised that there are 15 alternative programs, beyond the regular curriculum, which feature themes such as wilderness, ecology, music, art, drama, and fine arts. Council was further advised that elements within required courses include First Nations components and that liaison with First Nations occurs in an effort to ensure that material of relevance is included at the junior and senior high school level. With respect to cross cultural training for teachers, department staff advised that Yukon certification for new teachers now includes a requirement for teachers to participate in an approved cross cultural course. Council noted, however, that teachers who were already on staff when this requirement was introduced were exempt from the requirement.

- **MIDWIFERY**

The presenter, a practising midwife, explained the scope of service and support provided by midwives and outlined the differences in the care offered by midwives and that offered by physicians. Council was advised that midwives do not work only with clients who elect to give birth at home; in some areas, midwives are able to work alongside physicians with clients who elect, or are advised, to give birth in hospitals. It was the view of the presenter that women and their families should be the decision-makers in determining pre-natal, childbirth and post-partum care and that a funded midwifery program should be considered in that context.

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL cont.

- **COMMUNITY HEALTH**

Staff from the Women's Directorate presented an overview of a number of studies that had been conducted on various aspects of women's health, including the "Yukon Health Promotion Survey' and the "A Cappella North Report". Council was advised that the concept of a women's health centre has been supported by women for several years; however, in a number of studies conducted, and in the course of an earlier presentation on community health on the streets, the concept of a community health centre for families, which could complement current existing services, had been supported.

- **YUKON EQUITY PROJECT**

In September 1995, the facilitators provided information on the Yukon Equity Project. Council was advised that equity in this context referred to equal tolerance for people's differences. The project was designed to examine societal images of gender as well as gender equity issues in two phases. The first phase was a retreat for teachers and community members who would be acting as facilitators at a subsequent retreat for students. Phase two of the project was the retreat for high school students from both Whitehorse and rural communities. The facilitators anticipated that awareness of issues of gender equity among students attending the retreat would be raised, resulting in a positive change in attitude that would be reflected in the classroom and in the school in general. In December 1995, the facilitators returned to Council to provide a follow up report on the project and advised Council that the retreats had been judged successful. It was reported that, as a result of the retreats, groups of students had continued to meet to discuss the issues and some school action plans were being developed. Response from school administrators, staff and councils had been generally very positive.

MEETINGS

- Under its operating procedures, the Yukon Health and Social Services Council is committed to holding at least four meetings a year.

- In 1995/96, four regular meetings took place on the following dates:
  - June 16 and 17, 1995
  - September 29 and 30, 1995
  - December 15 and 16, 1995
  - March 29 and 30, 1996.

- In 1995/96, at the request of the Minister of Health and Social Services, one additional Council meeting was convened to review specific Departmental initiatives.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1995 - 1996

YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

BUDGET:		$ 40,000.00
Honoraria	$33,000.00	
Travel Costs	$ 5,388.00	
Meeting Expenses	$ 7,887.00	
Advertising/Community Awareness	$ 2,043.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:		$ 48,318.00
BALANCE:		<$ 8,318.00> [1]

[1] An additional Council meeting was convened in 1995 - 1996 at the request of the Minister of Health and Social Services.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AT MARCH 31, 1996

- David Buchan, Chair
- Mary-Ellen McCaffrey, Co-Chair
- Valerie Benoit
- Jon Breen
- Rosemary Couch
- Laurent Cyr
- Patricia Duncan
- Shannon Evans
- Phillip Gatensby
- Annie MacDonald
- Patricia Martin
- Belinda Stick
- Colleen Wirth

CONTACT ADDRESS

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